CII's Suggestion on Trade Relation with EU

974. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Confederation of Indian Industries (CH) has suggested Government to explore the possibility of cooperation in manufacturing sector with the Europcn Union (EU) in engineering goods, capital goods and auto components; and

(b) if so, the response of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) As a follow up of the 'agenda for action' of the first India-EU Summit meeting held in Lisbon on 28.6.2000, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CH) and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and their EU counterparts have taken up the initiative for joint study on the opportunities available for enhancement of bilateral trade and industry between Indian and EU countries. The sectors of engineering goods, capital goods and auto components arc included in the sector identified by CIL

Working of Commodity Boards

975. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether PP Prabu Committee has recommended widespread changes in the working of the Commodity Boards for tea, coffee, rubber, spices and marine products; and

(b) if so, the details of the changes recommended and the other recommendations and suggestions made, commodity specific and in general by the Committee?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The recommendations of Prabhu Committee mainly relate to changes in the existing structure and activities of the Coffee Board, Tea Board, Rubber Board, Spices Board, Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) and Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA). The recommendations include rationalization and reformulation of existing schemes,

promotion of interest of the small gowcrs, reduction in membership and manpower of the Boards, enhancing of financial powers, strengthening of research activities with periodical evaluation, privatization of domestic sales outlets, closing of Tea Board's foreign offices, withdrawing from control activities etc. The Committee has also suggested introduction of a Price Insurance Scheme for some commodities and a Price Stabilization Fund to benefit the growers.

Import of citric acid

976. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether substantial quantity of imported citric acid arc being sold in the domestic market without proper clearance;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) what effective measures arc being contemplated to protect the indigenous manufactures of citric acid?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (c) Citric acid is classified under Exim Code No. 29181400 and import of this item was made free prior to 31.03.1996. Presently, the item attracts basic custom duty of 35%. The total import of the citric acid in last three years has been as follows:

Year	Qty. (tons)	Value (Rs. Crore)
1998-99	4348	16.32
1999-2000	5722	23.69
2000-2001 (upto February)	5110	20.44

Source. DGCI&S, Calcutta

Though the import of citric acid is free, import of this item, like that of any other item in India is subject to domestic laws, rules, orders, regulations, technical specifications, environmental and safety norms as applicable to domestically produced goods. The consignments not meeting these standards would be appropriately